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14. ABSTRACT Planning and executing truly meaningful and effective PSYOP is a non-trivial process, especially in the asymmetric threat environments experienced during GWOT. PSYOP is an alchemy that combines elements of art, combat experience, science, linguistics, and religious and cultural expertise. The results of inadequate PSYOP planning, execution and lack of integration into full-spectrum operations, potentially has more detrimental effects on the psychological battlespace than the absence of PSYOP altogether. This paper discusses four key issues within the PSYOP process that operational-level PSYOP planners can focus on to improve the shaping of the psychological battlespace during full-spectrum operations. These issues include: The interrelationship between the dynamic conditions of the joint operational area (JOA) and a coherent campaign plan; the development of unique targeting strategies; the double-edged sword of delegated PSYOP product approval authority; and the integration of PSYOP into full-spectrum operations. Additionally, this paper provides JTF commanders with employment considerations and recommendations on effectively employing PSYOP.					
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**Maximizing the Psychological Battlespace: Effectively Planning and Integrating
Operational-Level Psychological Operations (PSYOP) into Full-Spectrum Operations**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of the Navy.

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ABSTRACT

Maximizing the Psychological Battlespace: Effectively Planning and Integrating Operational-Level Psychological Operations (PSYOP) into Full-Spectrum Operations

Planning and executing truly meaningful and effective PSYOP is a challenging process, especially in the asymmetric threat environments experienced during GWOT. PSYOP is an alchemy that combines elements of art, combat experience, science, linguistics, and religious and cultural expertise. The results of inadequate PSYOP planning, execution and lack of integration into full-spectrum operations, potentially has more detrimental effects on the psychological battlespace than the absence of PSYOP altogether. This paper discusses four key issues within the PSYOP process that operational-level PSYOP planners can focus on to improve the shaping of the psychological battlespace during full-spectrum operations. These issues include: The interrelationship between the dynamic conditions of the joint operational area (JOA) and a coherent campaign plan; the development of unique targeting strategies; the double-edged sword of delegated PSYOP product approval authority; and the integration of PSYOP into full-spectrum operations. Additionally, this paper provides JTF commanders with recommendations on effectively planning and integrating operational-level PSYOP.

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INTRODUCTION

Tensions are running high in one of the world's newest flash points. The CNN talking heads continue to drone on about "Crisis," "Fragile peace," and "Tenuous cease-fire" as your staff continues to tirelessly grind through all the loose-ends of the OPLAN. A few days later "Bloodshed continues" blares out of the television just before your phone rings. The Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) informs you that the "tipping point" has been reached and the POTUS has made the decision to execute the OPLAN that you and your staff have been laboring over for many weeks. You are now leading an entire Joint Task Force (JTF) into harm's way.

As combat operations commence within the Joint Operations Area (JOA) general lawlessness of the population begins to blur the lines between combatants and non-combatants.¹ Embedded in the OPORD is the task "prepare to restore law and order, and support the installation of a U.S.-recognized government."² Furthermore, the rules of engagement (ROE) include: "Conduct all operations to minimize collateral damage to nonmilitary personnel and facilities, and limit economic hardship."³ How can these actions occur simultaneously in the midst of combat operations?

The preceding vignette is intended to set the stage for discussing four issues within the PSYOP process that operational-level PSYOP planners can focus on to improve the shaping of the psychological battlespace during full-spectrum operations.⁴ These issues are: The

¹ Roughly adapted from: Lawrence Yates, "Panama, 1988-1999: The Disconnect between Combat and Stability Operations," *Military Review*, Vol. 85, Iss. 3 (May/Jun 2005): 50-51.

² *Ibid.*, 49.

³ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴ The PSYOP process is seven-phase, standardized, non-linear framework by which PSYOP is planned and conducted. The phases are: planning; target audience analysis; series development; product development and design; approval; production, distribution, and dissemination; and evaluation. Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Process, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.301 (Washington, DC: GPO, 7 August 2007), viii.

interrelationship between the dynamic conditions of the joint operational area (JOA) and a coherent campaign plan; the development of unique targeting strategies; the potential pitfalls of delegated PSYOP product approval authority; and the integration of PSYOP into full-spectrum operations.⁵

Planning and executing truly meaningful and effective PSYOP is a non-trivial process, especially in the asymmetric threat environments experienced during GWOT, where missions inherent with all six operational phases (shape, deter, seize initiative, stabilize, and enable civil authority) can occur within the battlespace simultaneously. This dynamic operational environment is the essence of full-spectrum operations,⁶ which presents the PSYOP planner the greatest challenges in shaping the battlespace. PSYOP is an alchemy that combines elements of art, combat experience, science, linguistics, and religious and cultural expertise. The results of inadequate PSYOP planning, poor execution, and lack of integration into full-spectrum operations, potentially has more detrimental effects on the psychological battlespace than the absence of PSYOP altogether. To improve the shaping of the psychological battlespace during operational-level full-spectrum operations, this paper recommends that PSYOP planners: Distill the operational objectives into a coherent PSYOP campaign plan; segment the populations within the JOA and develop unique targeting strategies; understand the double-edged sword of delegated PSYOP product approval authority; and finally strive to continuously integrate and synchronize operational-level PSYOP into the spectra of full-spectrum operations. Before discussing concepts at

⁵ These issues were heuristically derived based on the experience of the author obtained from over 15 years in the PSYOP community, from multiple deployments, and insights from fellow PSYOP soldiers.

⁶ Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual (FM) 3-0 (Washington, DC: GPO, 14 June 2001), 1-14 to 1-17.

overcoming the four derived issues within the PSYOP process, it is first necessary to refine the definition of operational-level PSYOP.

DEFINING OPERATIONAL-LEVEL PSYOP

Psychological operations are planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.⁷

This broad definition of PSYOP covers the entire range of military operations and generally all levels of war. Continuing to drill down into the joint psychological operations doctrine yields the following definition for operational-level PSYOP: “Designed to strengthen United States and multinational capabilities to conduct military operations in the operational area and accomplish particular missions across the range of military operations.”⁸

Unfortunately, this definition is of little value because it does not provide any indication of the planning, preparation or execution of psychological operations, and campaigns aimed at supporting or accomplishing operational or strategic objectives in a given theater. A more coherent definition of operational-level PSYOP is: “The focused employment of psychological operation forces, capabilities and resources to achieve theater-strategic objectives through the planning, preparation, and execution of a single campaign.”⁹ This refined definition directs the JTF PSYOP officer to translate the JTF commander’s operational objectives into operational-level PSYOP objectives and validate that these derived objectives are nested with the GCC’s theater-strategic PSYOP objectives. Once this validation process is complete, the definition further directs the accomplishment of

⁷ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*. Joint Publication (JP) 3-53 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 5 September 2003), I-1.

⁸ Ibid., I-4.

⁹ Adapted from: Milan N. Vego, “Operational Warfare,” NWC 1004 (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2000), 21.

operational-level PSYOP objectives through a series of major operations as a part of a single campaign.¹⁰ The results of these efforts are only useful when they are coherently integrated in an operational-level PSYOP campaign plan. At the operational-level of war, the PSYOP campaign plan forms the foundation on which all operational- and tactical-level PSYOP is developed, planned, and executed. Developing and employing a coherent campaign plan is one of the most constructive means to enable the effective employment of operational-level PSYOP during full-spectrum operations.

VIEWING THE JOA THROUGH THE LENS OF THE CAMPAIGN PLAN

The PSYOP campaign plan is the strategy that integrates the PSYOP product development, targeting, and assessment processes with the planned military operations within the JOA that are intended to achieve the JTF commander's operational objectives. The first step in developing a PSYOP campaign plan involves a thorough examination of the foreign audience, which includes identifying exploitable vulnerabilities and/or susceptibilities that are based on the perceived or real needs, wants or desires of the foreign audience.¹¹ The themes to support the operational-level PSYOP campaign plan can be derived from this examination, which are intended to focus PSYOP product development¹² on the exploitation of these derived vulnerabilities by persuading or directing the foreign audience to satisfy their needs by altering their behavior. From an operational art perspective, this process is the essence of identifying a foreign audience's center of gravity and thereby enabling the spectrum of PSYOP capabilities to be focused against that point to achieve the intended effect.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations*, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.03 (Washington, DC: GPO, 15 April 2005), 6-2.

¹² Ibid., 1-8. FM 3-05.03 fails to complete the explanation of the purpose of PSYOP themes. Therefore, the author has rectified this shortcoming.

Based on personal experience, one of the common pitfalls of planners while developing a PSYOP campaign plan is mirror imaging. In the context of psychological operations, mirror imaging is a manifest process where an individual believes that the foreign audience will share their perceptions of the military activities within the JOA. These perceptions are intuitive judgments based on culture, personal experience, heuristics and available information. Undoubtedly, military personnel and foreign target audiences will have varying perceptions of unfolding events within the JOA. Therefore, planners must strive to perceive the dynamic environment within the JOA as viewed from the perspective of the foreign target audience. Otherwise, mirror imaging will be the death knells of an effects-based campaign¹³ because failing to accurately view the JTF's actions through the lens of the foreign target audience will result in inadequate shaping of the psychological battlespace and negative impacts on the JTF commander's effects based operational objectives.

Although no individual can escape their culture, it is still important to find the most authentic and clear lens through which to view the JOA. Viewing the JOA through the lens of the PSYOP campaign plan will enable planners to consider the complexity of the psychological battlespace and the time required to effect behavior change. Understanding the effects of operations as seen through the lens of the foreign audience's culture and psyche must be a principal planning consideration for every operation.¹⁴ For example, the current security challenges in Iraq are comprised of: foreign and home-grown terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists; criminal activity and government inadequacy and corruption; tribal and ethno-sectarian competition and violence, all of which are fueled by malign actions of Syria

¹³ Williamson Murray and Kevin Woods, *Thoughts on Effects-Based Operations, Strategy, and the Conduct of War*, IDA Paper P-3869 (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2004), ES-1.

¹⁴ Peter W. Chiarelli, and Patrick R. Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-spectrum Information Operation," *Military Review*, 85, No. 4 (Jul/Aug 2005): 14.

and Iran.¹⁵ Although this is an extremely complex example, it does highlight that there are no quick or easy solutions, and that a generic or recycled PSYOP campaign plan will fail to focus PSYOP efforts on effectively shaping the battlespace. It is necessary to undergo a cognitive shift that focuses PSYOP efforts on setting the stage and creating an environment that will lead to change rather than trying to effect change directly.

The inference of such a cognitive shift is that PSYOP campaign plans must not only define the objectives but also delineate the objectives by foreign audience. The secondary significance of viewing the JOA through the lens of the PSYOP campaign plan is that it allows for the identification of significant trends.

Since the JOA is a dynamic environment, the PSYOP campaign plan can not remain static; it must be periodically tailored as the military and security situation in the JOA evolves. As the JOA evolves it becomes imperative to employ more sophisticated methods of integrating PSYOP and operations. The challenge for the PSYOP planner is to overcome the limitations of the current methods of communicating with foreign audiences and continuously develop and improve unique and innovative strategies for shaping the psychological battlespace.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Formulating an effective PSYOP campaign requires a deep understanding of the foreign audience at all levels, including their culture and subcultures.¹⁶ This reinforces the need for rapid and ongoing development of foreign audience analysis in the context of well-articulated

¹⁵ David H. Petraeus, "Testimony," Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 2007, <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/Petraeus-Testimony20070910.pdf/> (accessed 29 September, 2007).

¹⁶ Christopher J. Lamb, "Review of Psychological Operations Lessons Learned from Recent Operational Experience," (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2005), 31.

campaign objectives.¹⁷ As the JOA matures the PSYOP campaign must also become more sophisticated and integrate a balance of multiple themes and techniques.¹⁸ This requires creative thinking in determining new and innovative methods to communicate with foreign audiences that incorporate the threading of multiple themes, use of emotion, and a sense of nearing the fulfillment of the needs, wants or desires of the foreign audience.

The key at this stage in the campaign is to communicate with foreign audiences using techniques that are not instantly recognizable as products produced by the United States Government. Some potential techniques include:

- Ensuring that all products are created using words, symbols, concepts, and a style of prose consistent with the emotional and rhetorical communication style of the foreign audience;¹⁹
- Developing newspapers or magazines that include news from around the JOA, written, printed, and distributed by host nation personnel;
- Broadcasting radio/television programs from host nation stations in order to capitalize on existing listener/viewerships with an emphasis on live as opposed to recorded product;²⁰
- Using host nation produced stickers, posters, banners, billboards, apparel, or graffiti;

¹⁷ Lamb, “Review,” 31.

¹⁸ This is an extrapolation of Lamb’s comments based on personal experiences during OEF-1. Ibid., 43.

¹⁹ When developing PSYOP products it is important to capture the cultural context of words, symbols and concepts with an emotional content consistent with the foreign audience’s language. Typically, English removes many of the literary and rhetorical devices and patterns that are common within a foreign audience. It is important to emulate these devices as much as possible.

²⁰ In the early stages of OEF this was accomplished by provided HN stations with alternatives to the limited reel-to-reel tape music played daily. During KFOR-1 a radio station (Galaxia Radio) was purchased. The out-of-the-box possibilities to gain airtime are unlimited.

- Engaging in relationship-building activities with alternative advocacy channels,²¹ local religious figures, or key decision makers in order to leverage their influence, which may take the form of speeches, sermons or fatwas;²² and
- Sponsoring free internet cafés, managed by host nation personnel, which expose users to friendly computer network operations (CNO).

Many in the PSYOP community may balk at the application of these techniques out of concern of disseminating “Black PSYOP.”²³ However, as the JOA evolves foreign audiences become sufficiently savvy to recognize the ultimate source of the disseminated products, which mitigates the potential concern over “Black PSYOP.” Typically, the United States is at a distinct disadvantage in the competition for the “hearts and minds” because Americans are seen as outsiders.²⁴ Therefore, it is absolutely critical to produce products that are of commensurate quality, content, and prose as the adversary or other traditional host nation media sources. Otherwise, the potential of establishing and maintaining legitimacy with a foreign audience will suffer due to perceptions of amateurish efforts.

The secondary aspect of increasing the level of sophistication of operational-level PSYOP involves the targeting process. This can be improved by segmenting as opposed to targeting foreign audiences.²⁵ The concept of segmentation is distinct from targeting

²¹ Lamb, “Review,” 43.

²² A fatwa is a legal opinion or decree handed down by an Islamic religious leader.

²³ PSYOP is classified according to the source of the product: white, black, or gray. Products disseminated from an acknowledged source are classified as “White PSYOP.” White PSYOP is truthful in nature and based on objective fact. “Black PSYOP” is the antithesis of “White PSYOP” and consists of messages from unknown sources that are often based on lies or fabrications and are intended to purposely mislead the foreign audience and/or conceal the identity of the source. “Gray PSYOP” falls between the two extremes and is neither completely true nor false, and does not specifically identify the source.

²⁴ Steven Metz and Raymond A. Millen, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response,” *U.S. Strategic Studies Institute*, Army War College, (Carlisle, PA: November 2004), 28.

²⁵ Lamb, “Review,” 30.

because segmenting partitions populations²⁶ based on their needs, wants, or desires as opposed to their nationality, ethnic or religious affiliation. This allows for the prioritization and focus of PSYOP on specific segments with the ultimate goal of improving synchronization and utilization of PSYOP capabilities, and establishing the ability to influence the segmented foreign audiences.

THE DOUBLE-EDGE SWORD OF PSYOP PRODUCT APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Many JTF commanders become frustrated when they do not have the authority to approve new or updated PSYOP programs, plans or products resulting from the continual analysis of the foreign audience.²⁷ In order to maximize the flexibility and effectiveness of PSYOP to respond to newly identified foreign audience vulnerabilities and meet the needs of the JTF commander, it is advantageous to have product approval authority delegated to the JTF commander. However, delegating the product approval authority down to the division level can result in unintended consequences while shaping the battlespace during full-spectrum operations.

The approval chain for PSYOP products should be as short and streamlined as possible to maximize impact and achieve the intended effects on the foreign audience. Typically, during contingencies and declared war the Secretary of Defense normally delegates PSYOP product approval to the supported combatant commander.²⁸ Additionally, the Secretary of Defense

²⁶ Edward J. Hass, "An Overview of Segmentation: Why You Should Consider It and a Thumbnail of Its Dynamics," (Media, PA, International Communications Research, 2005), <http://www.icrsurvey.com/resources.aspx/> (accessed 29 September 2007)

²⁷ This is based on personal experience and further discussed in: Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Process, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.301 (Washington, DC: GPO, 7 August 2007), 1-7.

²⁸ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction: Joint Psychological Operations Supplement to the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan FY 2002 (CJCSI 3110.01 SERIES), CJCSI 3110.05C (Washington, DC: CJCS, 18 July 2003, Directive Current as of 3 August 2006), B-2.

can authorize the supported combatant commander to delegate PSYOP product approval to a JTF commander,²⁹ which occurred in operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.³⁰

Typically, this level of delegation is sufficient enough to provide JTF commanders the ability to be responsive to evolving conditions within the JOA where significant delays in the approval process could degrade the effectiveness of the products due to time-force issues. However, in extremely dynamic environments where division-level commanders need a high degree of local autonomy it may be advantageous to request the authority to delegate PSYOP product approval to tactical commanders for products with low political or non-controversial content.^{31, 32} Thus, products can be quickly tailored and disseminated to meet the immediate needs of tactical commanders. However, there are inherent risks in delegating PSYOP product approval authority down to the tactical level. These risks include:

- Inconsistency of product messages disseminated throughout the JOA,³³ which yields a variety of potentially conflicting messages, instructions, or rules;
- Inconsistent or poor product quality, which can have negative second- or third-order effects on effectiveness of future products and potentially, depending on the message and/or level of quality degradation, could result in damaging strategic impacts;
- The categorizing of PSYOP products that could require JTF commander approval as “command information” or “safety and public service messages” in order to circumvent the JTF approval process.³⁴

²⁹ Ibid., B-2.

³⁰ This is based on personal experience and further discussed in: Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Process, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.301 (Washington, DC: GPO, 7 August 2007), 1-7.

³¹ Lamb, “Review,” 66.

³² There is precedence for PSYOP delegation down to (two-star HQ), and even U.S. brigade commanders (one-star HQ). Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations Process, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.301 (Washington, DC: GPO, 7 August 2007), 1-3.

³³ Lamb, “Review,” 88.

These unintended consequences will result in ineffectual, disjointed and discredited messages that fail to produce effects necessary to shape the psychological battlespace in order to achieve the JTF commander's objectives. PSYOP officers at all levels must validate that all of their products meet quality standards and fall within the framework of the PSYOP campaign plan for the JOA. The JTF and/or the Joint Psychological Operations Task Force (JPOTF) must monitor, evaluate, and at least have the ability to provide tacit concurrence or veto of all developed products before they are produced or disseminated within the JOA. It is understandable that this could be a daunting challenge but the risks preclude actions to the contrary, if PSYOP is to be fully integrated into full-spectrum operations as a true combat multiplier. The final issue for the PSYOP planner involves shaping the psychological battlespace during full-spectrum operations.

INTEGRATING PSYOP INTO FULL-SPECTRUM OPERATIONS

The asymmetric nature of full-spectrum operational environments is characterized by complex operational considerations. The concept integral to full-spectrum operations is that actions are employed simultaneously as opposed to sequentially in order to achieve the objectives within the JOA.³⁵ As shown in Figure 1, operations are conducted across multiple lines of operation at once, which can span the entire range of military operations. For example: conducting combat operations; training security forces; restoring infrastructure; supporting humanitarian assistance; nation-building; and conducting psychological operations. What can be derived from Figure 1 is that PSYOP is integral to achieving the objectives associated with each line of operation; the culminating effect of which achieves the JTF commander's operational objectives.

³⁴ Ibid., 87.

³⁵ Adrian Wolfberg, "Full-Spectrum Analysis: A New Way of Thinking for a New World," *Military Review*, Vol. 86, Iss. 4 (Jul/Aug 2006): 36.

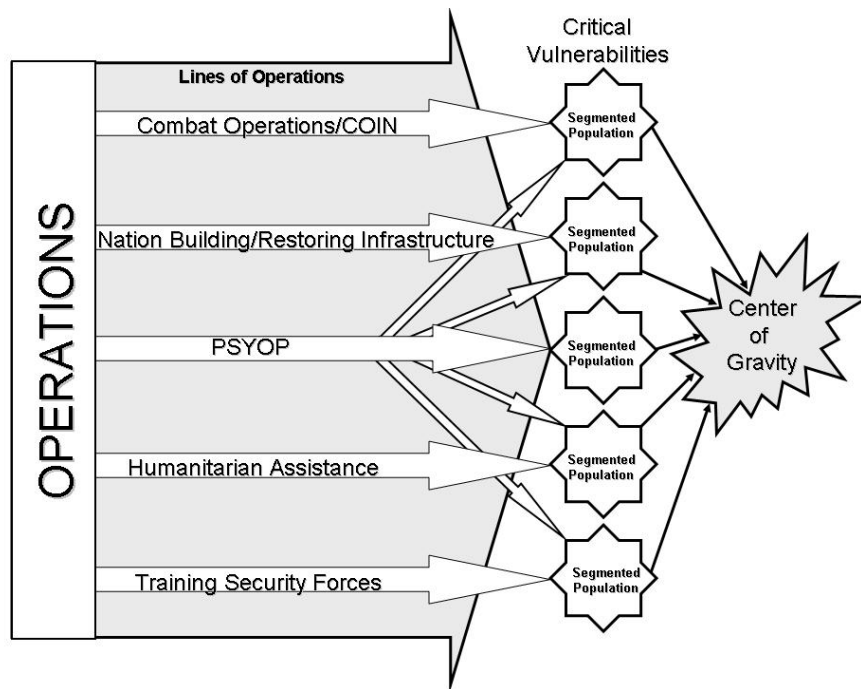


Figure 1. Full-spectrum Operations³⁶

When viewed in terms of operational factors (space-time-force), PSYOP employment considerations can be viewed as: specific operational environments (time-space); types of military operations (time-force); or specific audiences (space-force). However, the actual employment of PSYOP involves all three operational factors (space-time-force), which is complex. Additionally, the factor of information affects, sometimes profoundly, all three operational factors,³⁷ thus forcing PSYOP planners to continually analyze the interrelationships of these factors to effectively shape the psychological battlespace. Relative to PSYOP, full-spectrum operations requires the application of all three operational factors (space-time-force) and information over multiple lines of operation simultaneously, which further complicates the shaping of the psychological battlespace.

³⁶ As previously discussed, segmented populations are partitioned based on needs, wants or desires as opposed to nationality, ethnic or religious affiliation. This allows for the prioritization and focus of PSYOP on specific segments. In coordination with the synchronization function of Information Operations (IO), segmentation will improve the utilization of PSYOP capabilities. This diagram was created by the author.

³⁷ Vego, "Operational Warfare," 102.

Integrating PSYOP into full-spectrum operations requires the simultaneous incorporation of synchronized PSYOP products into combat operations, humanitarian, and reconstructive efforts; and integrating these products with interagency, coalition, IO/NGOs, and/or international partner operations.³⁸ In full-spectrum operations unity of effort is paramount. If JTF campaign planning is exclusive of PSYOP input, or PSYOP planning is conducted in isolation, then the intended psychological effects on the battlespace will not be achieved or could be counterproductive to the JTF's operational objectives. Proper employment of PSYOP and its supporting agents of influence can provide greater effects across the entire range of military operations and add greater full-spectrum potential.³⁹ PSYOP is the only agent of the JTF's combat multipliers that can synchronously shape the battlespace for full-spectrum operations.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning and executing truly meaningful and effective operational-level PSYOP is challenging during full-spectrum operations, especially in asymmetric threat environments. The PSYOP planner can overcome the four identified issues within the PSYOP process by: First distilling the operational objectives into a coherent PSYOP campaign plan, which establishes the boundaries of the PSYOP campaign and guides the product development, testing, approval and execution cycle; developing unique targeting strategies and segmenting the populations within the JOA based on their needs, wants, or desires as opposed to their nationality, ethnic or religious affiliation; avoiding the potential pitfalls of delegated PSYOP

³⁸ Michael W. Isherwood, "Understanding Full-spectrum Operations: Insights from Operation Enduring Freedom," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Iss. 42 (Apr/May/Jun 2006): 64

³⁹ Curtis D. Boyd, "Army IO is PSYOP: Influencing More with Less," *Military Review*, Vol. 87, Iss. 3 (May/Jun 2007): 73.

product approval authority; and finally integrating and synchronizing operational-level PSYOP into the spectra of full-spectrum operations.

Developing effective and adaptable operational-level PSYOP is not a trivial undertaking. It demands time, imagination, a sound understanding of the culture, needs, wants, and expectations of the populations within the JOA coupled with the personal experience, heuristics, and sound military thinking and common sense of the PSYOP planner, the JTF commander and the staff.⁴⁰ The potential negative strategic and operational consequences of poorly planned and executed PSYOP can be damaging to United States strategic interests.

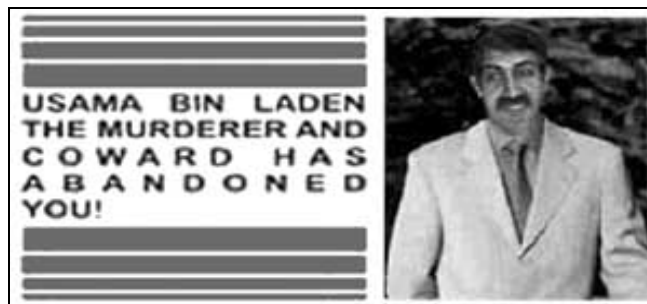


Figure 2. Leaflet containing an altered picture of Osama bin Laden⁴¹

For example as shown in Figure 2, controversy arose when a leaflet dropped in Afghanistan in 2001 used an altered photo of Osama bin Laden clean-shaven and in a western suit. One side of the leaflet read: "Osama bin Laden, the murderer and coward, has abandoned you." The national and international press highlighted the dissemination of this product and analysts agreed that the product was "absolutely ill-conceived and absolutely counterproductive."⁴²

⁴⁰ Adapted from: Milan N. Vego, "Operational Warfare," NWC 1004 (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2000), 463. Although Vego is providing a treatise on Campaign Design and not PSYOP campaign planning, many of his observations and conclusions are still generally valid for any operational-level planning process that is integrated into full-spectrum operations.

⁴¹ Terrence Smith, "Reaching Out," *PBS.org*, 18 February, 2002, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june02/public_2-18.html/ (accessed 3 January, 2008).

⁴² Ibid.

Ultimately, the JTF commander is responsible for developing and executing a coherent full-spectrum effects-based campaign that achieves the stated operational and strategic objectives. In order to facilitate success, the following recommendations are made for consideration by JTF commanders regarding the planning and integration of operational-level PSYOP:

1. Ensure that the JTF PSYOP planner has developed a PSYOP campaign plan specific for the JOA and is not solely operating under the auspices of a generic GCC PSYOP campaign plan;
2. Approve all the PSYOP themes and objectives and validate that they nest within the JTF's operational objectives. These themes and objectives should be sufficiently coherent to provide a framework for developing PSYOP products;
3. Assess whether PSYOP products are the result of creative thinking that incorporates or threads multiple themes, use of emotion, and a sense of nearing the fulfillment of the needs, wants or desires of the foreign audience;
4. Ensure that all products are created using a style of prose commensurate with the foreign audience. It is important to capture the cultural context of words, symbols and concepts with an emotional and rhetorical context consistent with the foreign audience's language;
5. Ensure that foreign audiences are segmented based on their needs, wants or desires as opposed to their nationality, ethnic or religious affiliation. This allows for improved integration and synchronization of PSYOP into full-spectrum operations. This may entail allocating sufficient fiscal resources for contracting local PSYOP product production with a host nation contractor;

6. Delegate PSYOP product approval authority as required, but caveat the delegated authority for only non-controversial themes, objectives, and/or segmented audiences. Then ensure that the JTF PSYOP planner monitors to verify compliance;
7. Finally, verify that PSYOP is integrated into the full-spectrum of operations and as conditions in the JOA evolve, the PSYOP campaign plan and product development cycle should evolve with it.

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the four key issues within the PSYOP process that operational-level PSYOP planners can focus on to improve the shape of the psychological battlespace during full-spectrum operations. These issues include: The interrelationship between the dynamic conditions of the joint operational area (JOA) and a coherent campaign plan; the development of unique targeting strategies; the double-edged sword of delegated PSYOP product approval authority; and the integration of PSYOP into full-spectrum operations. PSYOP planners must master these complex issues to fully maximize the combat multiplier capability of operational-level PSYOP in a full-spectrum operational environment.

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